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## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROTHFUS).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
March 1, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KEITH J. ROTHFUS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

### HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, appalling human rights violations take place in my native homeland of Cuba on a regular basis and have only gotten worse in the past few years. Just last week, the Castro regime sentenced a man to a year in prison. What was his crime? He did not watch Fidel Castro's funeral on the television. And just a few months ago, Danilo Maldonado,

also known as El Sexto, was arrested for writing "he's gone" on a wall after Fidel Castro's death.

Mr. Speaker, the Cuban people lack the most basic of human rights, and they are punished for any sentiment that is not in accordance with the Castro regime. The former administration of this wonderful country failed the people of Cuba.

Since the change in the Cuba policy, reports show that the humanitarian crisis has only gotten worse on the island. The 2017 Freedom in the World report put out by Freedom House showed that arbitrary arrests were at the highest level in 7 years. The Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation documented a monthly average of 862 arbitrary detentions between January and November of last year.

Raul Castro tries to silence the Cuban people by subjecting human rights defenders, journalists, and peaceful protesters to arbitrary arrest and short-term detentions. Castro also tries to cut any relation between the opposition and outside groups.

Just last week, Mr. Speaker, Luis Almagro, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, the OAS, was denied entry to Cuba. He was to receive the first Oswaldo Paya Liberty and Life Award. Paya was a human rights activist murdered by the Castro regime just 5 years ago. Almagro was to be presented with the award by Paya's daughter, but the Castro regime called this "an unacceptable provocation"—receiving an award.

Similarly, the former Education Minister of Chile denied entry to Cuba and former Mexican President denied entry to Cuba simply because they planned to meet with true human rights activists and defenders on the island.

I challenge these U.S. congressional delegations that go to Cuba to march with the Ladies in White on any given Sunday. Here they are. Here are their

faces. Will they be brave enough to do so, to march with these defenseless ladies, or do they just want a junket to glamorize Cuba?

Not to mention the many human rights abuses that go unreported, Mr. Speaker. Instead, the Cuban people risk their lives to record abuses, to report them to outside organizations.

The Ladies in White, Las Damas de Blanco, march every Sunday, peacefully protesting the unjust and barbaric imprisonment of dissidents.

Look at these images, Mr. Speaker, and the stories of the women on these posters. They are regularly beaten and arrested, yet they continue fighting for the freedom of their country. Protesters like Xiomara de las Mercedes Cruz Miranda, who has been in prison since last April; or Maria del Carmen Cala Aguilera, in prison since April of 2015; or Juana Castillo Acosta, who was beaten in her own home, and then sentenced to 5 years in house arrest.

There are so many women to highlight, so I will flip the posters.

Here are some other faces and other names: Yunet, Marieta, Jacqueline, Marta, and Aymara Nieto Munoz, right over here, just a handful of the many women who are in prison today in Castro's gulags.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the many who are persecuted daily for opposing the Castro regime. That is their crime. They are simply tossed in jail in Castro's effort to silence the people. But the Cuban people remain strong in the face of the repressive Castro regime. They do not give up hope of seeing a free and democratic Cuba.

I see that same hope, Mr. Speaker, in the eyes of my constituents, Cuban Americans like me and my family, who were given the opportunity to create a life in a country—our country—that stands for everything that Castro is against: freedom of speech, assembly, petition, the rule of law, and democracy.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Mr. Speaker, we must stand with the people of Cuba. We must stand against a Castro regime that seeks to benefit only itself. We must give the Cuban people hope and commit to help them achieve freedom and democracy.

It is the duty of the new administration to review the previous administration's failed policy and start working for the people of Cuba and against the Castro regime.

#### WE MUST RESIST NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, in this Chamber last night, as I listened to the President's address to the joint session, I could only think of one word: "resist."

Whether one voted for Donald Trump or not, we are all obligated to resist his incoherent and contradictory pledge to dismantle the protections of the Affordable Care Act with empty slogans.

Perhaps the most revealing moment of the Trump administration so far was his declaration Monday in his meeting with America's Governors that health care is complex. "Who knew?" he said.

Well, anybody who has done any work, any research, or had even had conversations with the people who rely on health care, who study health care, or deliver health care. This was not a secret that it is complex. Yet, for months, he has made reckless, misleading comments and has unleashed efforts to make the Affordable Care Act less effective and to destabilize insurance markets.

We should resist his cynical and cruel step of singling out people who have somehow been harmed by illegal immigrants as a special category. Why not an office dealing with the far greater number of Americans whose lives are turned upside down as a result of gun violence—which, by the way, is the method of choice for homegrown terrorists who, experts in his own government point out, are responsible for more terrorist acts and violence and death of Americans than people who are foreign-born.

We should resist empty promises to rebuild and renew America by failing to provide any meaningful detail. That squanders an opportunity for bipartisan cooperation and a badly-needed effort to revitalize America and put millions of Americans to work at jobs that can't be outsourced overseas and that will strengthen each community. It is important to resist an administration program long on divisive rhetoric, misinformation, and lost opportunities.

The least popular new President in our history, as near as we can tell, has mobilized millions of Americans to be involved, to resist. It is critical that Americans of good conscience, who care about the future of their country and want to change the trajectory and tone of politics, dive in now to protect

programs they care about which are under assault, to reject shortsighted policies that will spend billions of dollars on things we don't need, like even more nuclear weapons. How many times do we have to be able to blow up the world in order to achieve deterrence?

We should resist spending less on critical parts of our defense. For example, the diplomacy and international aid saves human lives; it undercuts the calls to radicalism for people without hope. Making the job of our diplomats and our aid workers harder and more dangerous and less effective should be resisted at every turn.

We should resist draconian budget cuts and hiring freezes that undercut the opportunity to take care of our veterans, especially their health. Their health is a long overdue promise that Trump has occasionally talked about but is now actively undermining.

We should resist unparalleled potential budget assaults on things that make a difference to our communities, like arts, public broadcasting, programs for children, things that matter deeply.

Together, we can resist these destructive policies in Congress, in the budget, and in legislation, while we strengthen their support for similar programs at home. Everybody should resist by being involved in their community. There is something every one of us cares about at home and on the national stage. We should resist politics of division, hatred, and hopelessly flawed and failing priorities.

We should resist. It is within our power to dramatically change the political equation. Remember, Donald Trump lost the popular vote by almost 3 million votes, while Democrats picked up seats in the House and the Senate. The country is much more evenly divided, and they are not united in support of this administration.

By doing our job now, it makes it possible to build on the successes by making sure everyone has a chance to participate in the voting process. Fight efforts at voter suppression.

It is time for all of us to engage in that resistance that adds energy and hope across America. It must start now and will continue until we defeat hate, bigotry, shortsighted policy, and misallocated priorities.

America can halt and reverse the damage that has been set in motion. We should resist. We should resist now.

#### RARE DISEASE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, this week we recognize the work of the tireless advocates fighting rare diseases.

I have the honor of serving as the Republican chair of the House of Representatives Rare Disease Caucus. I consider it one of the greatest responsibilities of my service to work for in-

novative treatment and new technologies and to build an atmosphere of appreciation and understanding in Congress for the hard work of all of the patient advocates. Their passion is often driven by the care of loved ones, and their personal stories are profiles in courage.

Hearing from thousands of advocates, many of whom are here in Washington this week, gives the members of the caucus renewed energy and purpose. Events held during Rare Disease Week here on Capitol Hill and at the NIH in Bethesda highlight what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done.

One of those champions joined us in the House Chamber just last evening. I was very proud that President Trump invited New Jersey resident Megan Crowley to his joint session address. Megan's story of combating a terrible rare disease is a testament to the American spirit. Megan is now a student at Notre Dame. I salute her, her parents, and her family for their courage.

Passage of the 21st Century Cures Act was a major accomplishment in the last Congress—indeed, in my opinion, it was the most important piece of legislation passed during the 114th Congress. We worked in a bicameral, bipartisan way. We worked with the White House and with the Department of Health and Human Services. It passed overwhelmingly in the House and in the Senate, and now it is the law of the land.

I am encouraged that the Trump administration will carefully implement its provisions to our healthcare system, improving the healthcare system and to help spur the next great medical innovations.

Congress will join and help direct that effort and proceed through the appropriations process to match progress and research funds.

□ 1015

Right now it takes 15 years for a new drug to move from the lab to the local pharmacy. The CURES Act modernizes clinical trials to expedite the development of new drugs and devices, removes regulatory uncertainty in the development of new medical apps, and breaks down barriers to facilitate increased research collaboration.

Patients with degenerative conditions, cancers, and rare diseases await the genius of these new solutions. We need to do everything we can to help find these cures.

I have met with many rare disease patients, advocates, and their loved ones. Their work is inspiring, and it gives our caucus a mission and a purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join the Rare Disease Caucus and help us in this great cause. In this, the week that we recognize the work of the tireless advocates across the Nation, I salute all of them for what they are doing for the American Nation.